

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9660

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 7355

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PROG

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR SMITH'S FAREWELL CALL ON
PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOINGNY

REF: (A) ABIDJAN 7273 (B) STATE 188796 (NODIS)
(C) STATE 193232 (EXDIS) (D) ABIDJAN 7336

1. AMBASSADOR ROBERT S. SMITH, ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. SMITH, PAID A FAREWELL COURTESY CALL ON PRESIDENT FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 6. THE CALL WAS BRIEF, SINCE THE PRESIDENT HAD GONE INTO MOURNING FOR THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE'S SISTER TWO DAYS EARLIER; THE FUNERAL TOOK PLACE AUGUST 7.

2. AMBASSADOR SMITH DELIVERED TWO LETTERS FROM SECRETARY KISSINGER TO THE PRESIDENT: ONE ON KOREA, PUERTO RICO AUGUST 2 SPEECH ON AFRICA. THERE WAS NOT TIME TO REVIEW THE CONTENTS OF THE TWO LETTERS UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE VISIT.

3. SPEAKING OF THE NAC, HOUPHOUET CONFIRMED THAT HE WAS NOT SENDING ANY MINISTEER TO COLOMBO, ONLY HIS AMBASSADOR TO THE UN AND SOME COLLEAGUES. HE HAS NO CONFIDENCE IN THE NAC, SINCE HE CONSIDERS MOST OF THE MEMBERS WHO LEAD IT TO BE VERY MUCH ALIGNED. HE WENT TO ONE SUCH MEETING IN ALGIERS SEVERAL YEARS AGO AND
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WILL NEVER GO AGAIN. EVEN THERE, HE DECIDED NOT TO

GIVE HIS PREPARED SPEECH. THE AMBASSADOR SAID IT WAS TOO BAD NOT TO HAVE HIS MODERATE VOICE REFLECTED AT COLOMBO, TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT HE FELT IT WOULD DO NO GOOD SINCE THERE ARE NO VOTES AND ALL POSITIONS ARE FIRMLY FIXED IN ADVANCE.

4. TURNING TO SOUTHERN AFRICA, THE PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT RADICALS STAGED THE HIJACKING THAT LED TO ENTEBBE AND THE SOVIETS WERE BEHIND THE RECENT SOWETO UPRISING SO THAT THEY WOULD OCCUR JUST BEFORE THE OAU MEETING AND THEREBY STIMULATE MORE RADICAL RESOLUTIONS.

5. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE DESPAIRED OF GETTING BALANCE IN THE WORLD AGAIN AFTER THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SIX MONTHS. COMMENT: IT WAS THE VOICE OF A TIRED LEADER, MADE SADDER BY THE TRAGIC DEATH BY DROWNING OF HIS WIFE'S YOUNGER SISTER JUST TWO DAYS BEFORE. END COMMENT.

6. THE PRESIDENT WISHED AMBASSADOR SMITH WELL IN HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT AND EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT HE WOULD STILL BE FOLLOWING AFRICAN, AND HENCE IVORIAN, AFFAIRS. THE AMBASSADOR THANKED THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS OPENNESS TO AMERICAN POINTS OF VIEW AND HIS TREMENDOUS ROLE AS AN AFRICAN AND WORLD-MINDED LEADER.

7. THE PRESIDENT'S FINAL REMINDER WAS THAT HE WAS STILL COUNTING ON A VISIT TO ABIDJAN FROM SECRETARY KISSINGER; THAT HE WOULD BE IN-COUNTRY CONTINUOUSLY UNTIL DECEMBER AND REALLY HOPED THE SECRETARY WOULD KEEP HIS PROMISE.
CRAWFORD

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O, MR. OTTO.

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